that have received positive response, are being implemented with immediate effect. India, on 24 November 2003, has welcomed the decision of the Government of Pakistan to work for expanding the communication links that were proposed on 22nd October, and proposed immediate technical level talks for early implementation of these proposals. The Director General Military Operations (DGMOs) of the two countries also agreed to observe ceasefire on the International Border, LoC and Actual Ground Position Line (AGPL) in Jammu and Kashmir with effect from the midnight of November 25, 2003.

Loss of Man-days

292. SHRI PRASANTA CHATTERJEE: Will the Minister of LABOUR be pleased to state:

(a) whether the man-days lost due to strike has gone down subsequently;

(b) whether on the other hand, the man-days lost due to closure, lockout and lay offs, are in steep rise; and

(c) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF LABOUR (SHRI SAHIB SINGH VERMA): (a) to (c) According to information provided by the Labour Bureau, Shimla, man-days lost due to strikes increased from 55.63 lakhs in 2001 to 96.64 lakhs in 2002. During 2003 (January-September), man-days lost due to strikes were 18.73 lakhs.

Man-days lost due to lock-outs declined from 182.04 lakhs in 2001 to 169.21 lakhs in 2002 while man-days lost due to lay offs increased from 23.65 lakhs to 27.84 lakhs during the same period. During 2003 (January to September) man-days lost due to lock-outs and lay-offs were 197.95 lakhs and 14.04 lakhs respectively. There were no man-days lost due to closures.

Unemployment in the country

293. SHRI RAVULA CHANDRA SEKAR REDDY: Will the Minister of LABOUR be pleased to state:

(a) whether unemployment in the country is around 2 per cent;

(b) if so, whether the reasons for rising unemployment has been analysed; and

(c) the measures proposed to control the problem?

THE MINISTER OF LABOUR (SHRI SAHIB SINGH VERMA): (a) As per the estimates available from the employment and unemployment survey of National Sample Survey Organisation conducted during 1999-2000, the estimated unemployment rate in the country on usual status basis was of the order of 2.23%.

(b) and (c) Major reason for the rising unemployment was that economy did not grow as expected. Government constituted a Special Group headed by Dr. S.P. Gupta, Member, Planning Commission to analyse the various aspects of employment unemployment situation prevailing in the country and suggest strategies and programmes for creation of one crore employment opportunities per year during the 10th Plan period. The strategies suggested by the special group include:

* 8% growth with business as usual will contribute around 30 million employment opportunites.
* Special employment generation programmes will yield around 20 million employment opportunities.
* Special emphasis on agriculture, irrigation, agro-forestry, small and medium enterprises, tourism, information, communication technology and other services.

Given the pattern of generation of additional employment opportunities, there will be near full employment situation by 2012.

Benefit to migrant labourers

294. SHRI RAMACHANDRA KHUNTIA: Will the Minister of LABOUR be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that the migrant labour inside and outside the country are not getting any benefit of labour standard, if so, the reasons therefor; and

(b) what is Government's action-plan to give relief to the migrant labour?